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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Summary

This report, submitted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, addresses the human rights dimensions of the Millennium Declaration and, in particular the links between human rights and the Millennium Development Goals. Human rights and the Goals share similar motivations and are complementary in their approaches. The report stresses that while achievement of the Millennium Declaration Goals will greatly advance the realization of human rights for much of the world's populations, it is only in ensuring respect for human rights that the Goals can be achieved in a sustainable way. The report identifies a number of basic human rights concerns in the process of achieving the Goals, namely respecting the principle of non-discrimination, ensuring meaningful participation, and the need for adequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms. In respect of the implications of adopting a rights-based approach for each of the specific Goals, the report recalls the work undertaken to date by mechanisms of the United Nations human rights system on rights-based approaches to development issues, including various guidelines published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The report concludes that the current review of the Millennium Declaration should explicitly recognize the relevance of States' human rights obligations to the strategies to achieve the Goals.

* E/2005/100.

** To allow time for consultation, the report has been submitted after the deadline established by the Documents Management Section.

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Introduction

1. This report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993. It focuses on the human rights dimension of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2000, and in particular, strategies to achieve the Declaration's goals relating to development, the Millennium Development Goals. This thematic choice of focus is motivated by the current process of reviewing progress towards the goals of the Millennium Declaration, in which the Economic and Social Council plays a central role. It is hoped that this report will make a constructive contribution to the Council's considerations and to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005.

2. As the international community undertakes this review of achievements since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, we should be more aware than ever of the dynamic links between development, security and human rights. Echoing these three central themes of the United Nations Charter, the Millennium Declaration itself sets forth an agenda for the new millennium of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights and democracy. In the five years since the Millennium Summit, the interdependence of these three issues has, if anything, become ever more apparent. In his report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General draws attention to their interdependence, noting that "[w]e will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights" (para. 17).

3. The present report will focus on one side of this triangle, namely the links between human rights and development. I feel it is incumbent upon myself as High Commissioner for Human Rights, as for the entire international community, to reaffirm the relevance of human rights to development activities generally, and more specifically, to underline the relevance of States' international human rights obligations to strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This relevance has two aspects. The first is the normative force of human rights, which means they must be respected as ends in themselves. In this context, the Millennium Development Goals must be examined to see how they can be used to promote and protect human rights. The second aspect is the instrumental value of human rights in securing the achievement of sustainable development outcomes, including the Millennium Development Goals. More specifically, we need to underline the role of human rights in supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the fact that they will not be achieved in any sustainable way without respect for human rights.

I. THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION: A HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION

4. Human rights are at the centre of the Millennium Declaration. They underpin the six fundamental values identified as "essential to international relations in the twenty-first century": freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. This is reflected in the goals and commitments set out in the Declaration and agreed upon by Member States. While some of these are set out in part V of the Declaration on

human rights, democracy and good governance, human rights commitments pervade the Declaration under a variety of headings, be it in encouraging ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring free access to information on the human genome sequence, combating trafficking in human beings, and so forth.

5. The eight Millennium Development Goals are similarly suffused with human rights content. Reducing poverty, seeking better health for individuals, addressing sex discrimination in access to education, fighting HIV and AIDS, improving access to safe drinking water, promoting adequate housing and international cooperation: these are all concerns addressed by internationally recognized human rights. In many of these areas, States have obligations under international human rights law. For example, under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States parties have obligations to ensure equality of access to education for boys and girls. Similarly, the right to food as recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights demands that States parties take steps towards reducing the number of people living in hunger. Some have suggested that the Millennium Development Goals themselves have the force of customary international law by reason of the repeated solemn commitment by a large number of Member States. It is clear from the Millennium Declaration alone that the Goals do not displace international human rights obligations, but rather must be achieved with full respect for those obligations.

6. The Millennium Development Goals stand out in the Millennium Declaration by reason of their time-bound and quantified nature. This concrete and simple stating of the Goals has assisted their impressive power to motivate both action and resources. It would be a mistake, however, to regard them as easier to implement than other commitments contained in the Declaration. To do so would be to accept that development is a largely technocratic exercise de-linked from political concerns. The Declaration as a whole builds on the outcomes of previous summits and world conferences, each of which devoted significant efforts to elaborating a means for implementing the commitments made by Governments. These provide the background for the Declaration and the context for the commitments it contains. Similarly, the Declaration's explicit and implicit references to human rights are supported by the detailed international human rights system built up over the past 60 years.

II. THE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP

7. The Millennium Development Goals are not ends in themselves but benchmarks towards achieving the Millennium Declaration's overarching goals, which include the enjoyment of all human rights by all. The Goals thus provide a potentially powerful motor for the realization of human rights in the context of development. On the other hand, a human rights-based strategy provides more effective and sustainable means to achieve these Goals. Focusing on individuals as key actors in their own development rather than passive recipients of commodities and services, a rights-based strategy is more likely to foster efficient national ownership and people's empowerment, both key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Human rights and related principles provide minimum standards and strengthen processes for the achievement of development goals.

8. The Millennium Development Goals and international human rights share a number of similar and complementary aspects. Thus, overall resource constraints are relevant to the strategies and pace for achieving the Goals, just as economic, social and cultural rights are - for

the most part - required to be realized progressively, to the maximum extent of available resources. Similar to the human rights approach, the Goals focus on efforts at the national level, and national ownership of the process is promoted. Likewise, the process established since the Millennium Summit has focused on the importance of partnerships at all levels - local, national, and international - in order to arrive at effective strategies to achieve the Goals. The realization of human rights also relies on partnerships between actors at all levels: rights holders, duty bearers, a vibrant civil society, the media, national human rights institutions, regional and international mechanisms and so forth. The monitoring component of human rights, exemplified at the international level by periodic reporting to the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, is also to an extent reflected in the practice of many States in producing Millennium Development Goal reports.

9. Many of the benefits that human rights bring to the Millennium Development Goals are echoed by other actors and in other approaches. One is the need to disaggregate the Goals and their corresponding targets and indicators in order to ensure that the most vulnerable individuals are prioritized, or at least not excluded from enjoying the benefits of Millennium Development Goal strategies. Disaggregation allows us to create a picture of the impact of these strategies on all parts of a society. Aggregate figures would allow gross discrepancies to be masked, raising the possibility of false sense that the Goals have been achieved for all. In focusing on the impact of Millennium Development Goal strategies on all parts of the population, a human rights approach introduces a qualitative aspect to the quantitative Goals, by asking not only "how many" are being lifted out of poverty, but also asking "who" is being lifted out of poverty. As stressed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its *Human Development Report 2003*, "[w]hen measuring progress, it is vital to look beyond country averages. In many countries the letter of the Goals may be achieved if efforts focus on people already doing the best in society. But the spirit of the Goals is not met if countries that cross the finishing line leave behind many poor people".[1]

10. A limited disaggregation already exists in the Millennium Development Goal targets, for example in respect of women in education. However, for the most part, groups vulnerable to discrimination - such as indigenous peoples - are invisible. A number of Member States have integrated broad disaggregation into their monitoring of Millennium Development Goal progress, and in some cases into the targets themselves. The capacity to gather disaggregated information is limited in many countries, and efforts must be focused on increasing this capacity, including through international cooperation.

11. In harnessing a rights-based approach to improve the effectiveness of the Millennium Development Goal strategies, the relative breadth of the human rights agenda should be recognized as underpinning the Goals but not necessarily entirely transposed into them. Too broad a view of the scope of the Goals may lead to a risk of over-expectations of their potential. As a set of priorities, the Goals have an appropriately narrow agenda. Human rights support them by providing a comprehensive and necessary framework that bridges gaps and sets out the broader policy context. For example, Goal 3 highlights just a few of the essential aspects of "gender equality and empowerment" namely, parity in enrolment rates in primary and secondary education. But this should not be taken as excluding the many interrelated human rights facets of gender empowerment strategies, including equality of opportunity in employment and exploring structural barriers to women's participation in public life. Similarly, while the Millennium Development Goals focus on health issues related to mothers and children and to

specific diseases, in particular HIV and AIDS and malaria, the human rights framework, in particular the right to the highest attainable standard of health, looks at access to health in a broad perspective, including, for example, the prevention and treatment of neglected diseases such as river blindness.

12. Although Goal 8 prioritizes international assistance in efforts to achieve the Goals, the seven sectoral Goals focus on the developing world. In contrast, the international human rights norms have universal coverage and provide a means to address poverty, HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality and so forth wherever they occur. While a human rights approach recognizes the need for countries to set priorities in addressing development challenges (and the Goals represent an important means for doing so), it also insists that attention be paid to the rights of all individuals in the country, and that regardless of priorities a basic level of dignity be ensured for all, and constantly improved.

13. For some in the human rights community, the Millennium Development Goals are said to suffer from a number of flaws that call into question their utility as a means for promoting and protecting human rights. Among these criticisms are: that the lack of human rights language in the formulation of the Goals suggest that human rights are excluded from the Goals; that the Goals are not ambitious enough - for example, in only halving poverty by 2015, whereas human rights seek to eliminate poverty altogether; that the process of formulation of the Goals excluded key constituents such as women and indigenous groups; that the Goals rely too heavily on State action in addressing poverty; and that there is little formalized follow up or accountability for the political commitments undertaken.

14. While these types of criticism certainly deserve our attention, my position is that any perceived deficiencies in the Millennium Development Goals in terms of human rights can and must be overcome. The ability to address these issues arises from the fact that the Goals have been formulated as an integral part of the Millennium Declaration, which is explicitly built on human rights. We are not faced with a choice between the Millennium Development Goal approach or the human rights approach. As outlined briefly in the present report, strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the strategies to promote and protect human rights share many complementarities and are ultimately mutually reinforcing. Similarly, many of the criticisms noted above can be addressed in the way in which the Goals are pursued. In this regard, I note that in 2005 the Secretary-General received the United Nations Millennium Project report entitled *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, the first comprehensive plan of strategies to achieve the Goals. This report stresses the human rights nature of the Goals and the importance of recognizing the relevance of human rights obligations in strategies for achieving them, suggesting that one of the reasons for shortfalls in their achievement are human rights violations. Together with the human rights aspects referred to in relation to specific Goals, the report goes some way towards illustrating how the Millennium Development Goals and respect for human rights can be pursued in unison.

15. A final but important consideration is that the Millennium Development Goals represent a rare opportunity in which global political and financial support are focused on specific areas of the human rights agenda. For the human rights community, this is an opportunity to explore more fully the implications of rights-based strategies in development and poverty reduction and

to illustrate the benefits of placing individuals at the centre of their own development rather than in the position of passive recipients of aid. It is also a challenge for the United Nations human rights system to adapt itself to supporting rights-based development initiatives on a much wider scale.

16. The following section will address in more detail the implications of drawing human rights more centrally into strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

III. RELEASING THE POTENTIAL OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR THE REALIZATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

17. Although a number of initiatives focused on the Millennium Development Goals have been undertaken since the Millennium Summit, this year the international community will consider concerted strategies aimed at achieving them in the coming decade. The reports of the Secretary-General and of the Millennium Project discussed above provide a basis for this consideration. To date, the criticisms of the Millennium Development Goals from some parts of the human rights community have to some extent been reflected in the relatively modest references to human rights in the literature on the Millennium Development Goals.[2] The present review process, both in the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly, provides a crucial opportunity for the relevance of human rights to the Millennium Development Goals to be again underlined and explored.

18. Human rights provide some qualitative components to the essentially quantitative Goals. They should help to ensure that the benefits of the process accrue to those most in need, and to deal with disparities in income and power. In doing so, a rights-approach places such strategies in a broader context, which considers the relative position of all parts of the population, applies equally to developed and developing countries, and encompasses all areas related to the dignity with which human beings live.

19. In considering how human rights specifically impact on strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, a distinction can be made between rights issues relevant to the process of employing a strategy (regardless of the Goal in question), and those relevant to the issue addressed by each specific Goal (hunger, trade, health, etc.).

A. General principles

20. While the individual Goals can be said to reflect the preoccupations of many human rights (rights to food, education, adequate health, etc.), the role of human rights related to the process of formulating and implementing strategies to achieve these Goals is less clear. Foremost among these concerns are the principle of non-discrimination, freedom of assembly and opinion and access to information to allow people to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect them, monitoring of commitments and accountability of duty bearers. Each of these is predicated on a human rights framework at the national level.

1. Non-discrimination

21. Non-discrimination is a fundamental principle in human rights law, and is identified in the Millennium Declaration as a fundamental value in the twenty-first century (para. 6). Because of the aggregate approach adopted in respect of the Millennium Development Goals outlined earlier, non-discrimination is particularly crucial to a rights-based approach to the Goals. Pursuing equity and narrowing disparities within countries - along sex, ethnic, racial and geographic lines - requires looking behind country averages and employing strategies to ensure reaching the most marginalized. This may at times result in more expensive strategies or longer time frames. However it would be unacceptable were Goal claimed to be "achieved", when in reality the situation of the most vulnerable sections of society remained static or regressed.

2. Participation

22. Along with non-discrimination, the principle of participation is a basic component of the world summits and conferences on which the Millennium Declaration is based. The Declaration itself affirms the importance of "democratic and participatory governance". Building meaningful participation into the Millennium Development Goal strategies is a key challenge, and is addressed at length in a number of the reports on these strategies.[3] At a very minimum, participation includes the right to express one's opinion freely (including with the aim of criticizing official policy), the right to assembly and association, the right to not be discriminated against, the right to information, and access to justice and free and fair elections. The Millennium Campaign initiative has been active both in encouraging individuals to become involved in the process, and in promoting a rights-based approach to the Goals.

3. Accountability and monitoring

23. One of the most distinctive contributions of the human rights approach to the Millennium Development Goals is the introduction of accountability and associated monitoring mechanisms. Human rights empower people to make claims against those with a duty to respond, thus strengthening accountability for development outcomes, including the Goals. Human rights provide the basis on which accountability for these commitments can be sought. Human rights accountability and monitoring mechanisms can use progress achieved towards the Millennium Development Goal, or the lack thereof, in measuring realization of associated human rights.

24. While Millennium Development Goals and human rights standards share a common aim of strengthening governmental accountability for results, the performance standards established by the human rights framework are legally binding. An appropriate legal framework will encourage rigorous attention to achieving the Goals and protecting human rights at the same time. This ability to insist on progress as a matter of right shifts the debate over Millennium Development Goals at the national level from one of political commitment or charity to one of legal commitments and obligations. At the same time, human rights law helps to identify "no-go" areas (for example, the deliberate or arbitrary retrogression of some rights at the expense of others) and unacceptable policy trade-offs in the development equation.

25. Accountability and monitoring of Millennium Development Goal commitments and human rights obligations are most appropriately located at the national level. A number of mechanisms already exist which are able to monitor the observance of human rights obligations

in the execution of strategies to achieve the Goals. In this respect, a growing number of countries have highly formal accountability mechanisms, which allow individuals to seek judicial remedies in respect of issues such as health, education and housing. Others have less formal systems that monitor performance in these areas against human rights benchmarks. However, beyond purely formal legal justice systems, accountability and monitoring rely on a national system of law, policies and institutions that guarantee both access to the relevant information (to allow for effective monitoring) as well as access to justice. At the national level, monitoring of Millennium Development Goal strategies in human rights terms could be undertaken by a number of bodies. At least one proposal has been made for this role to be carried out by appropriately constituted national human rights institutions, where they exist.[4]

26. At the regional and international level, mechanisms exist which monitor human rights commitments and allow for individual complaints. The United Nations human rights treaty bodies have a role to play in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the committees concerned with development issues. In monitoring the compliance of States parties with human rights obligations relating to the areas covered by the Goals, the latter provide the treaty bodies with one means for assessing enjoyment of human rights, both in terms of obligations of progressive realization and of immediate effect, for example, in respect of discrimination. Concluding observations of the Committees could also serve to guide the attention of development actors to areas requiring attention, such as a specific group vulnerable to discrimination. The treaty bodies are currently considering harmonized guidelines on reporting, which aim at encouraging States parties to adopt a coordinated approach to complying with their reporting obligations under all seven core international human rights treaties. The guidelines draw the attention of States parties to the linkages between implementation of human rights and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and to the usefulness of the reporting process in assessing progress towards both.

27. The special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights have made increasingly regular references to the Millennium Development in their annual reports to the Commission.[5] The Special Rapporteur on the right to health has presented the General Assembly with a detailed analysis of the links between the health-related Goals and the right to health.[6] Additionally, some special procedures directly contribute to the realization of one or more of the Goals because of the explicit links with their mandates, such as the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, and, as mentioned above, the Special Rapporteur on the right to health. Other special procedures also contribute to the achievement of the Goals through the interconnectedness of the human rights involved, as in the cases of the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, the independent expert on structural adjustment policies and foreign debt, or the independent expert on extreme poverty. Similarly, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences regularly raises the issue of gender inequality as a core factor contributing to the persistence of violence against women. But in the end, because of the interrelatedness between respect for human rights and the Millennium Development Goals discussed in paragraph 3 above, all special procedures play a role in drawing attention to the human rights implications of Millennium Development Goal strategies at the national level. I therefore encourage Member States to continue open cooperation with the special procedures in this regard, including through country missions, and call for a system-wide effort to make use of the analysis and assessments of the special procedures in their work towards the achievement of the Goals.

28. Other United Nations mechanisms have addressed the Millennium Development Goals, though not necessarily in an accountability or monitoring role. In 2005, the Working Group on the Right to Development considered the "obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in relation to the right to development" (E/CN.4/2005/25, para. 17). During this process, the Working Group and its high-level task force on the implementation of the right to development considered, inter alia, the importance of Goal 8 for the realization of the right to development. The Working Group recognized that the timely attainment of the Goals was critical for the progressive realization of the right to development. It recommended the employment of a multi-pronged approach aimed at strengthening institutional capacities, bridging information gaps and addressing accountability failures in the achievement of the Goals.

29. A number of monitoring mechanisms have appeared in relation to the Goals themselves. Political monitoring is undertaken during reviews of the Millennium Declaration, such as the one currently before the Economic and Social Council. In addition, the Secretary-General regularly reports on the implementation of the Declaration, and, with the support of the United Nations, Member States are encouraged to produce country and regional Millennium Development Goal reports. These reports are a tool for public information and promote social mobilization. Among other things, they aim at building national capacity for monitoring and reporting on the Goals. Each of these processes can assist in promoting accountability. In particular, a rigorous, rights-based approach to reporting would facilitate the monitoring of progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as a means of assessing enjoyment of human rights. To this end, these reports should explicitly recognize the relevance of human rights in efforts to achieve the Goals. This has, to an extent, already commenced with human rights language appearing in a number of the reports published to date. Reporting on commitments under Goal 8 is a necessary corollary to the monitoring of commitments under Goals 1 to 7. I have referred earlier to the work of the Working Group of the Right to Development in identifying criteria to assist in this process.

B. Existing human rights work relevant to the Millennium Development Goals

30. The impact of human rights on strategies to achieve each of the eight Goals is largely apparent from existing work on economic, social and cultural rights. The work of the treaty bodies, the Commission on Human Rights (in particular the special procedures), and of my Office, together with the relevant programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations, already paints an increasingly comprehensive picture of the implications of a rights-based approach to the areas addressed by the Goals, and development more generally.[7]

31. As highlighted above, human rights add a qualitative aspect to the otherwise purely quantitative nature of the Goals. For example, whereas Goal 1 targets at halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger between 1990 and 2015, implementing the right to food does not only encompass the right of every individual to be free from hunger. In addition, it requires food to be of adequate nutritional value, culturally appropriate and safe - three qualitative dimensions of the right to food.[8]

32. With the aim of clarifying the implications of human rights obligations for complex areas relating to development (such as those addressed in the Goals), my Office has, over a number of

years, promoted the publication of guidelines on human rights and specific issues. In 1996, the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights[9] were published, followed by the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking in 2002.[10] In recent years, my Office has been working on developing guidelines on a human rights-based approach to poverty reduction.[11]. These guidelines are meant to support policy makers involved in the design and implementation of poverty reduction strategies in integrating a human rights-based approach to their work. As has been argued in the Guidelines, a human rights-based approach has the potential of advancing poverty reduction: (a) by urging the speedy adoption of a poverty reduction strategy, underpinned by human rights, as key to complying with legal obligations vis-à-vis the most vulnerable and excluded; (b) by broadening the scope of poverty reduction strategies so as to address the structures of discrimination that generate and sustain poverty; (c) by confirming that economic, social and cultural rights are binding human rights, not just programmatic aspirations; (d) by urging the implementation of civil and political rights as instrumental in advancing the cause of poverty reduction, and particularly for ensuring meaningful participation of the poor in the decision-making processes that affect their lives; (e) by cautioning against harming and violating human rights in the name of other societal goals; (f) by creating and strengthening the institutions through which policy makers can be held accountable for their actions. I believe these Guidelines provide a useful tool to national and international policy makers engaged in building a human rights-based approach to poverty reduction strategies.

33. The impact of human rights on Goal 8, which bears the title "Developing a Global Partnership for Development" is distinctive. In committing to Goal 8, Member States recognized that a failure to achieve positive development outcomes was not necessarily a question of political will, but an issue of capacity. The human rights aspects of facilitating the burden-sharing needed to achieve the Goals have been addressed in human rights terms, for example in article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides that "[e]veryone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized", and in article 2, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which refers to the obligation of States parties "to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation". The Declaration on the Right to Development is more specific, stating that "States have the duty to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies with a view to facilitating the full realization of the right to development" (art. 4). Along similar lines to Goal 8, the right to development emphasizes a facilitative international environment for development based on a supportive and non-discriminatory trade regime, access to technology and capital, more participative decision-making on the rules governing the process of economic globalization, and where required, adequate development assistance to poorer developing countries. Issues of good governance, effective institutions, availability of material resources, access to technology and adequate international cooperation have been identified as the general challenges in the implementation of strategies for meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and are also at the core of an operational framework for the implementation of the right to development.

IV. FINAL REMARKS

34. This report represents an attempt to highlight key aspects of the relationship between human rights and the Millennium Development Goals in the context of current debates around the most appropriate strategies to achieve the Goals. Principal among these is the fact that the Millennium Development Goals and human rights share a common ultimate objective and commitment to promoting human well-being, recognizing the inherent dignity, freedom and equality of all people. Towards these ends, the Goals and human rights can form a mutually reinforcing strategy, in which the Goals support the realization of human rights, and the protection of rights promotes the sustainable achievement of the Goals.

35. As the Economic and Social Council considers the means for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the central role of human rights, and the obligations they impose, should be explicitly recognized. More specifically, the importance of human rights in the process of achieving the Goals deserves attention. Non-discrimination, meaningful participation, monitoring and accountability sharpen strategies for realizing the Goals by addressing the discrimination, powerlessness and weaknesses in systems of accountability that lie at the root of poverty and other development problems. In addressing each of the Goals, the work of the international human rights mechanisms provides significant guidance regarding the content of each of the relevant human rights and strategies for their promotion and protection. In particular, the attention of the Economic and Social Council is directed to the Guidelines on a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, developed by my Office at the request of the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

36. The latter part of the twentieth century saw enormous advances in raising living standards across the globe, as national and international development activities were rightfully accorded priority. Over the same period, the growing international human rights system began to address development concerns, drawing attention to the central role of the individual and her or his well-being in the development process. The Millennium Declaration, and the Millennium Development Goals in particular, present an opportunity to complete the process of fusing our development work with the promotion and protection of human rights. As the Economic and Social Council undertakes a review of progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, both the benefits and the obligations that human rights bring to our efforts to reach the Goals must be explicitly recognized.

Notes

[1] *Human Development Report 2003, Millennium Development Goals: a compact among nations to end human poverty*, p. 34.

[2] See the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health to the General Assembly (A/59/422, para. 6).

[3] See the Millennium Project report *Investing in Development* ..., p. 120; see also the report of the Expert Group Meeting on achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, Baku, 7-10 February 2005.

[4] See the Millennium Project report, note 3 above.

[5] See also the joint statement by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteurs on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made on 29 November 2002, entitled "The Millennium Development Goals and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (29 November 2002).

[6] See note 2 above.

[7] In respect of the United Nations system, see "The Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among the UN Agencies", *Report of the Second Interagency Workshop on Implementing a Human Rights-based Approach in the Context of UN Reform* (Stamford, United States of America, 5-7 May 2003).

[8] See general comment No. 12 (1999) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to adequate food.

[9] E/CN.4/1997/37, annex I. Guideline 6 on access to prevention, treatment, care and support was revised in 2002 at the Third International Consultation (see HR/PUB/2002/1).

[10] E/2002/68/Add.1.

[11] The draft guidelines appear on the web site of the Office at: http://www.unhchr.ch/development/povertyfinal.html

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